

# Keeping evergreens healthy requires some fall maintenance

The beauty of evergreens lies in their name— they are "Ever Green". In fact, that's likely the very reason you plant and grow these shrubs and trees.

Keeping your evergreens, including broadleaf evergreens like rhododendrons healthy, through the winter does mean some extra attention in the fall months.

To begin, it goes without saying that just because summer is long gone, your landscape plants are not past the point of needing moisture. This is especially true for trees and shrubs recovering from a dry summer. Remember that dryness can be a problem right through fall and into winter.

Evergreens are especially susceptible to damage from moisture loss from both dry soil and the drying effects of winter winds. You can protect them from wind damage by erecting a screen of burlap, shade cloth, or similar material stapled to wood stakes. Another way is to spray them with an antidesiccant product in late fall.

Antidesiccant— also called antitranspirant— sprays help prevent evergreen trees and shrubs from losing moisture in winter by coating their leaves with a clear film that does not interfere with plant growth, photosynthesis or other natural processes. These products are available at your local nursery or garden centers in liquid concentrate or ready-to-use spray form and should be applied when the tem-

perature is above freezing. They may be applied to both both broad-leaved and narrow-leaved evergreens.

Continue to water your evergreens as often as once a week in the absence of rainfall as long as the air temperature is above freezing. This is especially important for trees and shrubs that were just planted earlier this fall or those that were moved from one location in your yard to another. Don't water when it's below freezing, however, because the formation of ice can damage trees and shrubs.

Spread mulch around trees and shrubs if you haven't already done so or if the mulch you put down earlier needs replenishing.

Finally, fall is a good time to feed your large evergreens. A good choice for spruce, yew, hemlock, juniper and others is Miracle-Gro Evergreen Fertilizer Spikes 12-10-10. Evergreen Fertilizer Spikes deliver nutrients right where trees need them most— at the roots — and they won't harm other plants when used as directed. Or you might want to use Miracle-Gro Evergreen Tree and Shrub Food, especially formulated for acid-loving plants with a guaranteed "no-burn" formula.

For a guide to how many spikes to use for your trees and large shrubs or more information about Miracle-Gro Evergreen Tree and Shrub Food, visit the Scotts Canada Web site, [www.ScottsCanada.ca](http://www.ScottsCanada.ca).

—News Canada

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